

Bringing Knowledge to Life in Macomb County

Summer 2004

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities. Extension offices in counties throughout the state link the research of the state's land grant university, MSU, with the issues of concern in local communities. Extension provides information and offers educational programs in agriculture and natural resources, youth and families, community and economic development. Local citizens serving on the county Extension council regularly help select current focus areas for programming.



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MSU Extension is an educational organization funded jointly by the Board of Commissioners, the State of Michigan through Michigan State University and federally through the US Department of Agriculture.

Focus Areas for Extension Programming in

Building Healthy Families	Helping Youth Succeed
Building Healthy Communities	Healthy Economic Development
Healthy Environment	

Gather 'round the old ash tree

Issues surrounding the emerald ash borer (EAB) are quite different for municipalities than homeowners. To meet the educational needs of municipalities, MSUE (in cooperation with the Macomb Conservation District) offered municipal officials a chance to interact with a panel of university (MSU), state and federal EAB experts on May 20.

The program included discussion about and demonstration of:

- New management options based on current MSU research.
- Treatment, removal and replacement plans for municipal trees.
- A portable ash log mill (which makes viable lumber) to encourage recovering recyclable resources.

Participants came from 14 communities (from Macomb, Oakland, Wayne and Washtenaw counties). Twenty-five percent of participants were surveyed in the month following the program. Of those surveyed, 100 percent indicated that they actively shared program information with community residents, supervisors, city commissioners and others. One community printed EAB information in the community newsletter. Another spoke with the American Public Works Association, which all helps disperse researched information. To encourage diverse new tree plantings (a new management strategy), many municipalities are expanding their list of street trees available to residents.

Participants had the chance to learn from one another—an unexpected effect of the information exchange. EAB experts, as a result of attending, also committed to the development of a future Web site to educate municipal decision makers about treatment, removal and replacement plans. All agreed that an open line of communication is key to the success of controlling EAB in Michigan. *Contact: Sandra Richards*

Take a bite out of NATURE

Recent research shows that more families spend less time outdoors, participate in fewer physical activities, spend less time together and demonstrate poor health habits. This is especially true for low-income families living in urban areas.

Through a grant from the Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan, Macomb MSUE established New Adventures Together Using ouR Environment (NATURE).

In partnership with Fitzgerald Public School District, Mount Calvary Community Center and the city of Warren, the NATURE program staff has engaged 80 children, ages 6 to 12 from at-risk neighborhoods in southern Macomb County in weekly classes focusing on outdoor activities and healthy living skills.

The youths recently completed the “Nibbles and NATURE” class, an interactive program designed to increase children’s knowledge of nutrition and food safety. In addition to learning about the food pyramid, fat facts, food safety and healthy eating, students gained hands-on experience preparing healthy snacks. Pre/post assessments demonstrate that after completing this seven-week program:

- 89 percent of students now make healthier food choices (58 percent prior to the class).
- 58 percent now read nutrition information of food labels (33 percent prior).
- 84 percent now eat vegetables every day (68 percent prior).

To encourage continued healthy eating and parental involvement, students were also provided with a cookbook containing easy recipes they can cook at home.

Contact: Kathy Jamieson

Townships work to preserve farmland

Macomb County has seen tremendous development during the last 10 years, and is home to the state’s first- and second-fastest growing communities. The loss of prime agricultural land, farming businesses and rural character are byproducts of this northern-bound development.

In response to this growth, Armada, Bruce, Lennox, Ray and Richmond townships (the Northern 5) formed a committee to address the townships’ desire to preserve farmland.

The committee, known as the Northern 5 Purchase of Developmental Rights (PDR) Committee, met over a three-year period to develop an ordinance to provide the framework for farm preservation. The townships, acting as a unit, established an assessment system, allowing local government to intervene and actualize farm preservation.

Once the ordinance was developed, an MSUE local government specialist led the development of a local-intergovernmental agreement. Through collaboration and education of citizens, farmers and public officials, the Northern 5 adopted the Farm Preservation Ordinance and a local-intergovernmental agreement. The committee will soon begin notifying farmers and seeking external funding to preserve one farm.

The Northern 5 received statewide recognition for their accomplishments, including:

- Developing a multi-phase, partnership;
- Formulating and adopting a farm preservation ordinance;
- Creating an assessment/application process; and
- Signing an intergovernmental agreement.

The Northern 5 collaborative responded to citizen desire to manage the community by retaining rural character and farming industry in a rapidly changing county. *Contact: Marilyn Rudzinski*



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